

# HALLOWEEN III

## season of the witch

### sequelmania

**N**o, Sequelmania isn't the title of a new terror flick. It's the name of a game that's played in Hollywood.

The rules are simple: if a movie makes lots of money, do more like it. If a movie makes incredible amounts of money, do the same thing over again.

More than any other film buffs, monster movie fans have suffered sequels which are inferior to the originals and, at the same time, beat their themes to death.

Some exceptions:

*The Bride of Frankenstein*, which many fantasy film followers feel is superior to the original.

*Superman II*, a film that lacked the drama and characterization of its predecessor, but made up for it in the action department.

*The Empire Strikes Back*, an extension rather than a rehash of *Star Wars*.

But the list of less-than-satisfactory sequels is far, far longer. Just a few titles would be:

*Son of Kong*, whose story was not a rerun of the original, but whose leading ape was but a pale shadow of his great pop.

Christopher Lee's later Dracula films, like *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*.

Hammer's last Frankenstein pictures such as *The Horror of Frankenstein*.



One of Cochran's insidious masks, the pumpkin head, which transforms ordinary children into mind-slaves.



The Universal monsterfests of the 1940s including *The Ghost of Frankenstein* and *The Son of Dracula*.

The endless procession of Godzilla movies, among which are such disasters as *Godzilla vs. Megalon* and *Son of Godzilla*.

*Halloween II*, a recycling of *Halloween I* without that film's stylish scares.

## no return from the grave

If *Halloween II* was a disappointment to people who wanted to see the saga take a few new turns, it was not a letdown as far as the public was concerned.

*Halloween II* was a moneymaker, so it was no surprise when a third Halloween picture was announced.

What *was* a surprise, and a pleasant one, is that the film is an original. It goes in an entirely different direction from the first two films, leaving the



Dr. Daniel Challis spills a quantity of lethal computer chips in his struggle with Cochran's henchmen.

Shape in the grave and returning to the supernatural meaning of the holiday itself.

The decision to go ahead with the new picture was made on the Sunday after *Halloween II*'s Friday opening: the box office results had been so spectacular that producer Dino De Laurentiis said to co-producer Debra Hill, "Let's do another one. Let's do three!"

And so they did.

But Hill and her partner in the first two films, John Carpenter, did not merely want to rehash the same story.

Nor did they want to use the same cast, a particularly risky move in that to many moviegoers, the first two films were distinguished by the terrorized presence of Jamie Lee Curtis.

However, the duo felt that not only had *they* milked the format of a lunatic-on-the-loose vs. a panicked female, but other moviemakers had done so as well in such efforts as *Terror Train*—starring Ms. Curtis—*He Knows You're Alone*,

*Deadly Blessing*, and many, many more.

They had to try something new and different.

## lagoon's loss

Screenwriter Nigel Kneale happened to be in Los Angeles at this time, holding script conferences at Universal Pictures for their planned remake of *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, which is presently on hold but will one day be directed by Joe Dante, former FM contributor and the man who made us howl with *The Howling*.

Since Universal was the studio backing the new Halloween film, it's no surprise that Kneale's name came up as a potential scripter.

Nor was the British writer exactly a novice in this field. He has written the screenplays for such classics as:

*The Creeping Unknown*, *Enemy from Space*, and *Five Million Years to Earth*, the legendary science fiction films featuring the headstrong Professor Quatermass.

Ray Harryhausen's underrated film version of H.G. Well's classic novel *First Men in the Moon*.

The teleplay for *The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas*, a BBC-cast which was made into the best of the Yeti films and starred fantasy film veteran Peter Cushing.

Kneale delved into the origins of Halloween itself and the ancient and mystical powers of Stonehenge in England, throwing in a modernistic slant of computer technology to complete his wicked brew.

The results are fresh, fascinating, and frightening!

## mask of the microchip death

In the new scenario, an old toymaker named Cochran (Dan O'Herlihy) becomes disgusted with the commercialization of Halloween. He's old enough to remember how the holiday was celebrated in the old days, when it was an ancient festival of the dead.

Cochran misses those days, and intends to do something about it.

He's going to find a way to celebrate witchcraft and evil spirits rather than make merry with Casper the Ghost and Amazing Spider-Man costumes, with candied apples and Milk Duds.

From his Silver Shamrock factory in the sleepy little town of Santa Mira, California, Cochran designs three horribly beautiful masks—

A pumpkin head, bright orange and grinning hideously!

A skull, eyeless and pale!

A witch's hat, with a face that's something to scream home about!

Cochran advertises his deliciously terrifying masks extensively on television and radio. Kiddies by the score see his commercials, and go wild. Not only are the designs appealing to them, but because the masks are better-made and less expensive than anything on the market, Cochran sells millions of his gruesome goodies all across the nation.





With the nasty jingle, "Eight More Days To Halloween..." ringing in their ears, these children do Cochran's bidding.

## the force behind the mask

What none of the consumers knows, of course, is that Cochran has masterminded a rather insidious plan.

He has stolen a huge, five-ton slab from Stonehenge, the landmark whose origins are unknown but whose purpose has long been suspected to be linked to the occult.

Breaking the monolith into microscopic fragments, Cochran has inserted them into microprocessors—computer chips, the "brain cells" of computer technology.

His actions give the computer circuitry magical powers. And in manufacturing his Halloween masks, he made certain that each mask contained one of these microprocessors.

Is this the power which caused the masked shape to commit murder and mayhem in the first two films? The implication is that he was an experimental creature for this new form of mind control.

But the Shape is dead; the world has a more immediate problem.

Cochran's masks compel the wearers to watch the final Silver Shamrock TV commercial. Tuning in, they will hear a jingle—

"Eight more days to Halloween,  
Halloween!

Eight more days to Halloween,

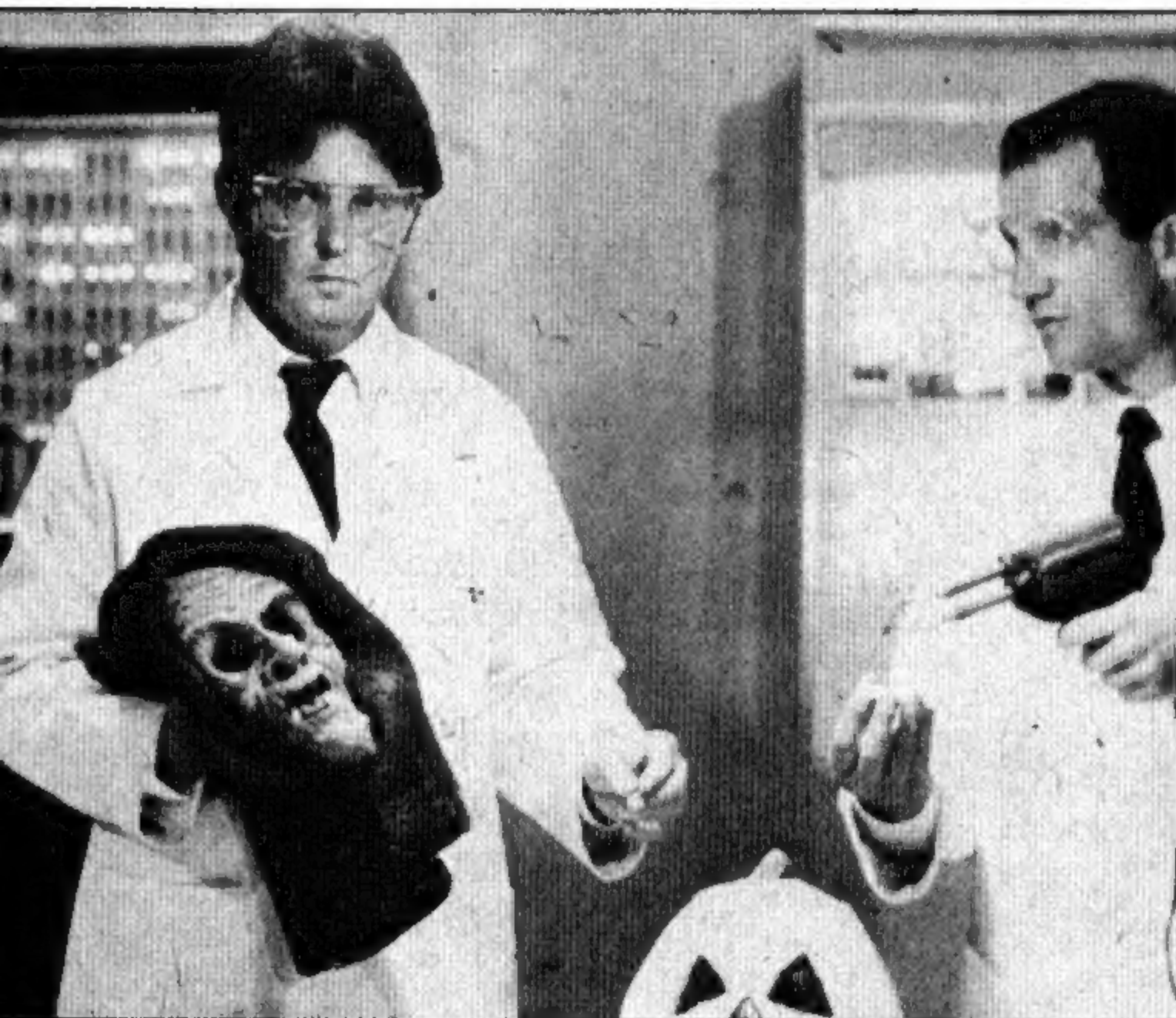


Dr. Challis (Tom Atkins) is choked up by more than Grimbridge's death.





Ellie Grimbridge (Stacey Nelkin) and Dr. Challis look with trepidation at the deadly masks made by Silver Shamrock.



Technicians in the employ of the satanic Cochran solder microchips into masks in this scene from *HALLOWEEN III*.



The griefstricken Ellie & her partner Dr. Challis look on as the body of the girl's slain father is carried off.

## Silver Shamrock!

It seems like a harmless enough tune, and it is —under ordinary circumstances. But hearing it while in the presence of the computer chip, evil will be unleashed throughout the world on a scale the likes of which has never before been imagined, much less witnessed by mortal eyes.

## fly in the ointment

But all is not lost. The Silver Shamrock has not yet won the day.

While all of Cochran's evil-doing is going on behind-the-scenes, a storekeeper who wells Silver Shamrock masks gets wind of the toy-maker's plot.

This knowledge costs the poor fellow his life.

But though he is slain, his demise comes after he is treated by one Dr. Daniel Challis (Tom Atkins) at a local hospital, and has the chance to warn the physician that something evil is afoot.

Challis believes the murdered man and decides to look into the matter.

At the same time, the late storekeeper's grieving and vengeance-bent daughter Ellie Grimbridge (Stacey Nelkin) enters the picture.

Challis is taken with her courage, determination, and beauty, and together they investigate the charges which had been made by the dead man.

They arrive in seemingly peaceful Santa Mira, checking into a local motel. Clues begin to appear suggesting that Ellie's father was right.

The question is, what to do about Cochran's plan, and how to stop him before it is too late!

## silver and challis

Challis eventually makes his way to the Silver Shamrock, where things do not go well for him.

But—why spoil the fun? The mystery?

Suffice to say that if there's a *Halloween IV*, there's going to have to be some recasting.

## mira, mira on the water

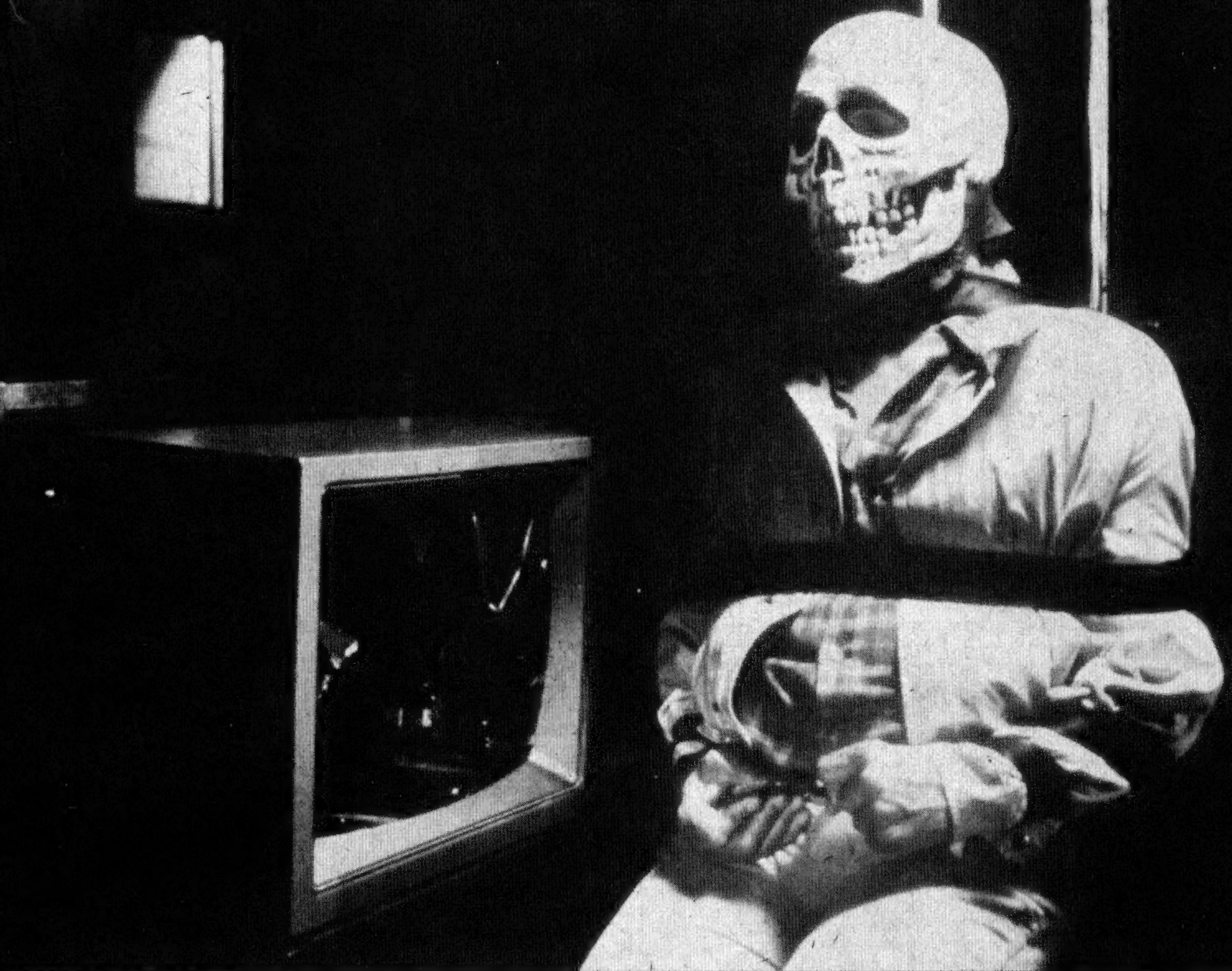
*Halloween III: Season of the Witch* began its principal photography on April 19 of this year, shooting on a six-week schedule and finishing on-time on May 28.

The \$2.5 million spent on the film is the lowest possible still using a union crew, which has minimum wage requirements. The talent of the filmmakers ensured that the movie looked much more expensive than that.

One of the assets in achieving this goal was the selection of the town used to represent the fictitious Santa Mira. The site was Loleta in Northern California, a city selected after some 1,500 miles of California country was scoured by the producers.

Hill states that for the week the crew spent shooting there, it was not at all difficult to imagine that the events described in the screenplay were real. "There was something mysterious about Loleta," she says with a shudder.





Dr. Challis finds himself in desperate trouble more than once during the course of **HALLOWEEN III**—though never so deep as when outfitted with one of the devilish Silver Shamrock masks and subjected to Cochran's mesmeric jingle.

## a bewitching cast

The performers in *Halloween III* are from varied backgrounds, two of them being no strangers to the fantasy film genre.

Tom Atkins, the film's Dr. Challis, first worked with both Debra Hill and John Carpenter on *The Fog*, in which Jamie Lee Curtis also starred.

His other roles include a featured part in Carpenter's *Escape from New York* and in George Romero's horror omnibus film *Creepshow*.

Dan O'Herlihy, who plays Cochran, starred in the doomsday thriller *Fail Safe* and co-starred with Orson Welles, Banquo's ghost, and the three witches in the film version of *Macbeth*.

Stacey Nelkin, as Ellie, is the only newcomer to the horror-fantasy scene. Her previous films include Mad Magazine's *Up the Academy* and the real-life horror film *The Triangle Factory Fire Scandal*.

John Carpenter was busy with *The Thing* and, unable to direct this picture, handed the task to his life-long friend Tommy Lee Wallace. The two grew up together in Bowling Green, KY, and at-

tended school together at USC.

Wallace was the production designer on Carpenter's first film, *Dark Star*, and worked as the editor on both *Halloween* and *The Fog*. He wrote the screenplay for Dino De Laurentiis' horror film *Amityville: the Possession*, a sequel to the successful *Amityville Horror*.

## ten times fast

Apart from being that rarity, a good sequel, *Halloween III* is historic in another way: it has what must be the weightiest, most complicated above-the-title credit line of all-time.

Here it is, for your amusement and enlightenment:

Universal Pictures Presents  
A Moustapha Akkad Presentation  
A Dino De Laurentiis Corporation Film  
A John Carpenter/Debra Hill Production  
A film by Tommy Lee Wallace  
"Halloween III: Season of the Witch"

Challis could have done Cochran in simply by making him read that one ten times fast!